

ONLY HUMAN

By Sidney Fields

Workers' Paradise Lost

Charles Tung arrived at the Red Chinese embassy in Busumbura, capital of Burundi, Africa, at noon on May 25 to serve as a cultural attache. He was tense, frightened, but determined.

"All I could think of," he confided during a visit here, "was how could I get out alone and where could I go."

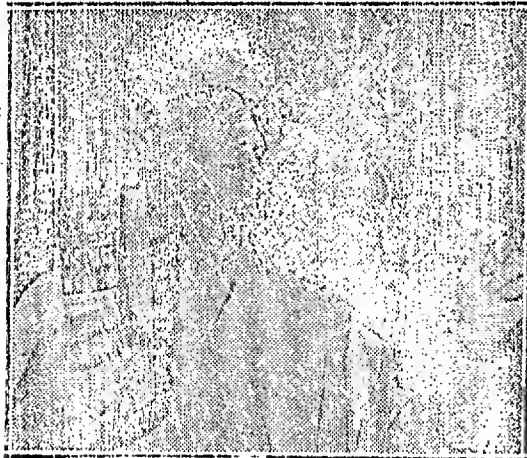
Tung, now 24, son of a watchmaker, became disillusioned in the workers' paradise at 17 and is one of the few who ran. It isn't easy.

"Once out of China you cannot go anywhere except with another person," he said, "even in a country considered friendly like Burundi. In an unfriendly country like Russia you go out in groups of four. The ambassador walking with his wife is always accompanied by the chauffeur, a member of the Research Office, the espionage arm in Chinese embassies."

Escorted by Party Member

Tung came to Burundi with the third secretary of the embassy who had studied Russian for years but couldn't speak a word of it, but he got the job because he was a party member. They shared a room together.

"He wasn't there when I awoke at 7 the next



Charles Tung—His note of freedom.

morning," Tung said. "I slipped into my slippers, a shirt and trousers. I forgot to put underwear on. But I did take the only money I had, a 5-pound note, worth \$14."

When he reached the lobby he ran right into the third secretary. There was only one thing to do: He stopped to chat with him. Tung noticed the embassy chauffeur near his car outside, walked out, talked to him innocently about the natives, taxis and the location of the other embassies. The chauffeur said it was time for breakfast.

"We went in again," Tung said. "The whole staff was engrossed in conversation. I ate quickly and sauntered out, as if returning to my room. When I walked into the street and jumped into a taxi, my throat was so tight I couldn't breathe. I told the driver to go to the American embassy."

It was exactly 20 hours and 50 minutes since he arrived in Burundi.

"The first one I met at the U.S. embassy was

the 5-pound note, I blurted out: 'I want to defect. I have no cab fare'."

The Greek paid the driver, ushered Tung into the charge d'affaires, who looked at the defector and said: "Many try and many are fakes."

Tung answered quietly: "I am risking my life."

The embassy phoned the Burundi foreign minister to say that Tung had defected. The Red Chinese immediately screamed that he was kidnaped.

"It was awkward for the Americans," Tung said. "They couldn't get me a safe conduct out of Burundi. I had to wait."

He Gets Impatient

The quibbling went on until July 22. On that day an impatient Tung just walked out of the U.S. embassy—64 days after he defected.

"All I can tell you is that sympathetic Africans helped me to the border and through other countries and I made my way to Rome," he said. "To tell you more would jeopardize the way for others who want to flee."

The American embassy in Rome sent him to Washington quickly. His first impressions here astounded him.

"People criticizing the President," he said. "And manual workers who we were told were on a bare subsistence level, better paid than office workers. Rural areas with electricity and trucks and cars, just like in cities."

He was equally astonished at American capabilities: A state department official rebuilding a cellar into a playroom, a college teacher washing his own car, an administrator fixing a broken telephone. And he was disturbed by our fumbles and our flaws.

"But the difference is that here you admit them and try to correct them," Tung said. "Oh, if there was a way for Americans to let the Chinese mainlanders know what the Free World is like their leaders would quickly lose their belligerence and arrogance. They have the bomb, yes, but that only means the Chinese people will eat less and suffer more."

Hopes to Teach Math

While he studies English he is under the wing of the State Department, which has questioned him closely and often. He is a French language expert but hopes to teach math in an American college one day. And he still holds on to his 5-pound note as an emblem of his new freedom.

From childhood he was told that any American is automatically an enemy of any Chinese. "I have yet to find an enemy here," he said.

He lives alone and peoples his new world with new ideas and new faces.

"Anyone whose mind was never in chains cannot know the joy of freedom," Tung said. "But I go anywhere alone. But yet I take no unnecessary chances. Communist vengeance has a long arm."